

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A playlist server system for supplying a playlist response to a client device
2 exchanging information with an information server system over a communications network
and storing ads, comprising:

4 playlist response generating means for generating a playlist response identifying a
plurality of selected ads to be presented by the client device; and

6 first communications means for establishing a playlist response send communications
link with the client device via the communications network over which the playlist response
8 is transmitted to the client device,

wherein the information server system and the playlist server are independently
10 controlled.

2. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, further comprising:

2 second communication means for establishing a playlist request receive
communications link with the client device via the communications network;

4 wherein the playlist response generating means further comprises playlist generating
means for generating a playlist included in the playlist response which identifies a plurality of
6 selected ads to be presented by the client device in response to receipt of a playlist request.

3. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, wherein:

2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;

the playlist currently employed by the client device comprises a current playlist; and

4 the current playlist is replaced by the new playlist when the client device receives the
new playlist.

4. The playlist server system as recited in claim 3, wherein the playlist response
2 includes an instruction directing the client device to replace the current playlist with the new
playlist.

5. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the playlist currently employed by the client device comprises a current playlist; and
4 the current playlist is concatenated with the new playlist when the client device
receives the new playlist.

6. The playlist server system as recited in claim 5, wherein the playlist response
2 includes an instruction directing the client device to concatenate the current playlist and the
new playlist.

7. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, wherein the playlist response
2 comprises client information and a new playlist.

8. The playlist server system as recited in claim 7, wherein the client information
2 controls the presentation of the ads by the client device.

9. The playlist server system as recited in claim 7, wherein the client information
2 controls turnover rate of the ads presented by the client device.

10. The playlist server system as recited in claim 7, wherein:
2 client information specifies the periodicity at which the client device generates a
playlist request; and
4 the playlist response generating means generates the playlist responsive to the playlist
request.

11. The playlist server system as recited in claim 7, wherein the client information
2 includes a minimum time separation between competing ones of the ads.

12. The playlist server system as recited in claim 7, wherein the client information
2 includes specifications directing the manner in which the client device is to present each of
the ads.

13. The playlist server system as recited in claim 7, wherein the ads include current
2 ads and expired ads, and wherein the client information includes a minimum time period
during which the client device presents the current ads before the client device presents the
4 expired ads.

14. The playlist server system as recited in claim 7, wherein the ads include current
2 ads and expired ads, and wherein the client information includes a maximum time period
during which the client device is permitted to presents the expired ads.

15. The playlist server system as recited in claim 7, wherein the client device
2 switches between a persistent presentation mode and a short-lived presentation mode of
presenting the ads responsive to selected parameters included in the client information.

16. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, wherein the playlist is check-
2 summed at both the playlist server and the client device to thereby generate respective
checksums, and wherein the playlist received by the client device is ignored when the
4 respective checksums are not identical.

17. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, wherein the selected ads each
2 include at least one image.

18. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, wherein the selected ads each
2 include audio data.

19. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the client device employs a plurality of current playlists; and
4 one of the current playlists is replaced by the new playlist when the client device
receives the new playlist.

20. The playlist server system as recited in claim 19, wherein the playlist response
2 includes an instruction directing the client device to replace one of the current playlists with
the new playlist.

21. The playlist server system as recited in claim 1, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the client device employs a plurality of current playlists; and
4 at least one of the selected ads is deleted from the current playlists when the client
device receives the new playlist.

22. The playlist server system as recited in claim 21, wherein the playlist response
2 includes an instruction directing the client device to delete the at least one of the selected ads
from the current playlists.

23. The playlist server system as recited in claim 21, wherein the new playlist
2 becomes one of the current playlists when the playlist response is received by the client
device.

24. A playlist server system for supplying a playlist response to a client device which
2 exchanges information with an information server system and which receives ads from an ad
server over a communications network, comprising:

4 playlist response generating means for generating a playlist response identifying a
plurality of selected ads to be presented by the client device; and

6 first communications means for establishing a playlist response send communications
link with the client device via the communications network over which the playlist response
8 is transmitted to the client device,

wherein the information server system and the playlist server are independently
10 controlled.

25. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, further comprising:

2 second communication means that effects a playlist request receive means with the client device via the communications network;

4 wherein the playlist response generating means further comprises a playlist generating means for generating a playlist included in the playlist response which identifies a plurality of
6 selected ads to be presented by the client device in response to receipt of the playlist request.

26. The playlist server system as recited in claim 25, further comprising:

2 playlist request parsing means for extracting selected information from the playlist request; and

4 selected information supply means for supplying the selected information to the playlist generating means to thereby initiate the playlist generating means.

27. The playlist server system as recited in claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information identifies the client device as one of a hardware client device and a software client device.

28. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the playlist server
2 responds to the playlist request by either by transmitting to the client device an indication that the current playlist is valid and does not need to be updated, or by transmitting to the client
4 device the playlist response including a new playlist.

29. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information includes at least one of user demographics and user/client device behavior.

30. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 29, wherein the playlist response
2 includes a new playlist generated by the playlist server based at least partially on one of user demographics and/or user/client device behavior.

31. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information includes an identification of a current playlist associated with the client device.

32. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein:

2 the selected information comprises information stored in a user data field identifying
current playlists controlling presentation of respective groups of the selected ads by the client
4 device; and

the playlist response includes a new playlist generated by the playlist server based on
6 the current playlists.

33. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein:

2 the selected information comprises information stored in a user data field; and
the playlist response includes a new playlist generated by the playlist server based at
4 least partially on the information contained in the user data field.

34. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 33, wherein the user data field
2 includes information indicative of usage history of the client device.

35. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 33, wherein the user data field
2 includes a user data field identifying the respective software operating on the client device.

36. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 35, wherein the user data field
2 further includes information identifying an operating system of the client device on which the
software is running.

37. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 33, wherein:

2 the user data field comprises:

a first data field including information identifying the respective software operating
4 on the client device;

a second user data field including information identifying an operating system of the
6 client device on which the respective software is running; and

the playlist response is generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the
8 information contained in the first and second user data fields contained in the playlist request.

38. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information includes usage data relating to the amount of time the user has used the client
device over a prescribed time interval.

39. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 38, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the usage data.

40. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information includes a display time remaining data field that specifies the total amount of
display time required for the stored ads that remain to be presented by the client device.

41. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 40, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the display time remaining data
field.

42. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the playlist request
2 includes a display time used recently data field that specifies the total amount of times that
ads were presented by the client device during a prescribed time interval.

43. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 42, wherein the prescribed time
2 interval comprises the present day.

44. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 42, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the display time used recently data
field.

45. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 44, wherein the prescribed time
2 interval comprises the present day.

46. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information further includes client device display screen data that specifies dimensions of a
display screen associated with the client device.

47. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 46, wherein the dimensions include
2 the height, width, and depth of the display screen, in pixels.

48. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information includes a distributor ID identifying the distributor of the client device.

49. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 48, wherein the distributor ID is
2 used in selecting at least one characteristic of the ads presented by the client device.

50. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 49, wherein the playlist response
2 includes a new playlist identifying ads which are presentable only by the client device having
the respective distributor ID.

51. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information includes a list of the ad identifiers corresponding to ads that have been presented
by the client device during a prescribed recent time interval.

52. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 51, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the advertisements that have been
displayed in a prescribed recent time interval identified in the playlist request.

53. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information includes at least two of:

a first user data field identifying a current playlist;

4 a second user data field identifying user demographic data;

a third user data field identifying user/client device behavior data;

6 a fourth user data field identifying usage history of the client device;

a fifth user data field identifying the respective software operating on the client
8 device;

a sixth user data field identifying the respective operating system of the client device;

10 a seventh user data field identifying the amount of time the user has used client device
over a prescribed time interval;

12 an eighth user data field identifying the total amount of display time required for the
stored ads that remain to be presented by the client device;

14 a ninth user data field identifying the total amount of times that ads were presented by
the client device during the prescribed time interval;

16 a tenth user data field identifying the dimensions of a display screen associated with
the client device; and

18 a list of the ad identifiers corresponding to advertisements that have been displayed in
the prescribed most recent time interval.

54. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 53, wherein the playlist server
2 responds to the playlist request by either by transmitting to the client device an indication that
the current playlist is valid and does not need to be updated, or by transmitting to the client
4 device the playlist response including a new playlist.

55. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 53, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server responsive to field data included in at least two of the first
through tenth user data fields.

56. The playlist server system as recited in Claim 53, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server responsive to one of the first through tenth user data fields and
the list of the ad identifiers included in the selected information.

57. The playlist server system as recited in claim 26, wherein the playlist response
2 comprises a new playlist identifying an ad type for one of the respective ads.

58. The playlist server system as recited in claim 57, wherein the ad type corresponds
2 to a postage stamp ad.

59. The playlist server system as recited in claim 57, wherein the ad type corresponds
2 to a toolbar ad.

60. The playlist server system as recited in claim 57, wherein the ad type corresponds
2 to a placard ad.

61. The playlist server system as recited in claim 57, wherein the ad type indicates
2 the timing employed by the client device in presenting the respective one of the ads.

62. The playlist server system as recited in claim 26, wherein the selected
2 information identifies a distributor of the client device.

63. The playlist server system as recited in claim 62, wherein:
2 the client device comprises a software client device;
the distributor provides the respective software for instantiating the software client
4 device; and
the playlist response is generated by the playlist server based on the identity of the
6 distributor.

64. The playlist server system as recited in claim 62, wherein:
2 the client device comprises a hardware client device;
the distributor provides the hardware client device to the user;
4 the playlist response is generated by the playlist server based on the identity of the
distributor.

65. The playlist server system as recited in claim 26, wherein the playlist request
2 comprises an extensible markup language (XML) playlist request.

66. The playlist server system as recited in claim 26, wherein the playlist request parsing means employs a document type definition (DTD).

67. The playlist server system as recited in claim 66, wherein a respective DTD corresponding to one of a plurality of client device types is stored by the playlist server.

68. The playlist server system as recited in claim 66, wherein the DTD is embedded in the playlist request.

69. The playlist server system as recited in claim 63, wherein the DTD is specific to one of a plurality of client device types.

70. The playlist server system as recited in claim 26, wherein:
the playlist request comprises an extensible markup language (XML) playlist request;
the playlist request includes a document type definition (DTD) tag identifying a DTD associated with the XML playlist request;
the playlist server stores a respective DTD corresponding to the DTD tag; and
the playlist request parsing means employs the DTD corresponding to the DTD tag.

71. The playlist server system as recited in claim 26, wherein the playlist parsing means further comprises:

extensible markup language (XML) parsing means for verifying the wellformedness of the playlist request;

playlist analysis means receiving the playlist request after verification by the XML parsing means for generating an object;

database driver means receiving the object for building a query from the object for applying the query to a playlist server database.

72. The playlist server system as recited in claim 71, wherein the playlist analysis means receives the output of the database driver and constructs the playlist response.

73. The playlist server system as recited in claim 71, wherein the database driver
2 further comprises:

database communications means for establishing a database communications link
4 between the playlist analysis means and the database;
query means for executing the query, which includes at least one SQL statement; and
6 retrieve means for retrieving database outputs responsive to the query and providing
the database output to the playlist analysis means.

74. The playlist server system as recited in claim 25, wherein the playlist response
2 generating means generates one of an action command and the playlist response.

75. The playlist server system as recited in claim 74, wherein the playlist response
2 comprises a combination of client information and a new playlist.

76. The playlist server system as recited in claim 75, wherein the new playlist
2 comprises a name and a corresponding uniform resource name (URN) for selected ones of the
ads.

77. The playlist server system as recited in claim 74, wherein the playlist response
2 generating means generates the action command in response to receipt of a garbled playlist
request.

78. The playlist server system as recited in claim 77, wherein the action command
2 further comprises an error code directing the client device to send a new playlist request.

79. The playlist server system as recited in claim 77, wherein the action command
2 further comprises an error message which is presentable to the user by the client device.

80. The playlist server system as recited in claim 74, wherein the action command
2 causes the client device to delete all of the ads received by the client device responsive to a
command issued to the playlist server by an entity controlling the playlist server.

81. The playlist server system as recited in claim 25, wherein the playlist response
2 includes client information and a new playlist comprising a name and a corresponding
uniform resource name (URN) for each of the selected ads.

82. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the URN corresponds
2 to a storage location of the respective named ad on the ad server.

83. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the URN specifies a
2 location on the ad server redirecting the client device to a location on another storage device
for the respective named ad.

84. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the URN specifies a
2 location on the ad server redirecting the client device to an ad storage location collocated on
the ad server for the respective named ad.

85. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the client information
2 controls the presentation of the ads by the client device.

86. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the client information
2 controls turnover rate of the ads presented by the client device.

87. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the client information
2 specifies the periodicity at which the client device generates the playlist request.

88. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the client information
2 includes a minimum time separation between competing ones of the ads.

89. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the client information
2 includes specifications directing the manner in which the client device is to present each of
the ads.

90. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the ads include current
2 ads and expired ads, and wherein the client information includes a minimum time period
during which the client device presents the current ads before the client device presents the
4 expired ads.

91. The playlist server system as recited in claim 90, wherein the client information
2 includes a maximum time period during which the client device is permitted to present the
expired ads.

92. The playlist server system as recited in claim 81, wherein the client device
2 switches between a persistent presentation mode and a short-lived presentation mode of
presenting the ads responsive to selected parameters included in the client information.

93. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the playlist currently employed by the client device comprises a current playlist; and
4 the current playlist is replaced by the new playlist when the client device receives the
new playlist.

94. The playlist server system as recited in claim 93, wherein the playlist response
2 includes an instruction directing the client device to replace the current playlist with the new
playlist.

95. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the playlist currently employed by the client device comprises a current playlist; and
4 the current playlist is concatenated with the new playlist when the client device
receives the new playlist.

96. The playlist server system as recited in claim 95, wherein the playlist response
2 includes an instruction directing the client device to concatenate the current playlist and the
new playlist.

97. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the client device employs a plurality of current playlists; and
4 one of the current playlists is replaced by the new playlist when the client device
receives the new playlist.

98. The playlist server system as recited in claim 97, wherein the playlist response
2 includes an instruction directing the client device to replace one of the current playlists with
the new playlist.

99. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the client device employs a plurality of current playlists; and
4 at least one of the selected ads is deleted from the current playlists when the client
device receives the new playlist.

100. The playlist server system as recited in claim 99, wherein the playlist response
2 includes an instruction directing the client device to delete the at least one of the selected ads
from the current playlists.

101. The playlist server system as recited in claim 99, wherein the new playlist
2 becomes one of the current playlists when the playlist response is received by the client
device.

102. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein the playlist response
2 includes a new playlist comprising a name and a corresponding uniform resource name
(URN) for at least one of the ads.

103. The playlist server system as recited in claim 102, wherein the URN
2 corresponds to a storage location of the respective named ad on the ad server.

104. The playlist server system as recited in claim 102, wherein the URN specifies a
2 location on the ad server redirecting the client device to a location on another storage device
for the respective named ad.

105. The playlist server system as recited in claim 102, wherein the URN specifies a
2 location on the ad server redirecting the client device to an ad storage location collocated on
the ad server.

106. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein the playlist response
2 includes client information and a new playlist comprising a name and a corresponding
uniform resource name (URN) for selected ones of the ads.

107. The playlist server system as recited in claim 106, wherein:
2 the selected ones of the ads comprise first and second ads; and
the respective URNs for the first and second ads point to first and second ad servers
4 on which the first and second ads are disposed.

108. The playlist server system as recited in claim 107, wherein the first ad server
2 and the playlist server are controlled by a single entity.

109. The playlist server system as recited in claim 107, wherein the information
2 server system and the second ad server are controlled by a single entity.

110. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein:
2 the playlist response generating means generates the playlist responsive to receipt of a
playlist request; and

4 the playlist response comprises both client information and a new playlist including a
name and a corresponding uniform resource name (URN) for selected ones of the ads.

2 111. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein the ad server
comprises first and second ad servers controlled by first and second entities, and wherein the
selected ones of the ads are distributed between the first and second ad servers.

2 112. The playlist server system as recited in claim 111, wherein the first entity
controls the first ad server and the playlist server.

2 113. The playlist server system as recited in claim 111, wherein the information
server system is controlled by a third entity independent of the first and second entities.

2 114. The playlist server system as recited in claim 111, wherein:
the information server system comprises first and second information servers
controlled by respective third and fourth entities, and
4 the first entity is operated independently of the third and fourth entities.

2 115. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein the client
information controls the presentation of the ads by the client device.

2 116. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein the client
information controls turnover rate of the ads presented by the client device.

2 117. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein:
client information specifies the periodicity at which the client device generates a
playlist request; and
4 the playlist generating means generates the playlist responsive to the playlist request.

2 118. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein the client
information includes a minimum time separation between competing ones of the ads.

119. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein the client
2 information includes specifications directing the manner in which the client device is to
present each of the ads.

120. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein the ads include
2 current ads and expired ads, and wherein the client information includes a minimum time
period during which the client device presents the current ads before the client device
4 presents the expired ads.

121. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein the ads include
2 current ads and expired ads, and wherein the client information includes a maximum time
period during which the client device is permitted to presents the expired ads.

122. The playlist server system as recited in claim 110, wherein the client device
2 switches between a persistent presentation mode and a short-lived presentation mode of
presenting the ads responsive to selected parameters included in the client information.

123. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein the playlist is check-
2 summed at both the playlist server and the client device to thereby generate respective
checksums, and wherein the playlist received by the client device is ignored when the
4 respective checksums are not identical.

124. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein the selected ads each
2 include at least one image.

125. The playlist server system as recited in claim 24, wherein the selected ads each
2 include audio data.

126. A playlist server for supplying a playlist response to a client device which
2 exchanges information with an information server system and which receives ads from an ad
server over a communications network, comprising:

4 playlist response generating means for generating a playlist response identifying a
plurality of selected ads to be presented by the client device;

6 playlist request parsing means for extracting selected information from the playlist
request, comprising:

8 extensible markup language (XML) parsing means for verifying the
wellformedness of the playlist request;

10 playlist analysis means receiving the playlist request after verification by the
XML parsing means for generating an object;

12 database driver means receiving the object for building a query from the object
for applying the query to a playlist server database;

14 playlist generating means receiving an output of the database driver means for
generating a playlist for inclusion in the playlist response which identifies a plurality of
16 selected ads to be presented by the client device in response to receipt of a playlist request;

18 selected information supply means for supplying the selected information to the
playlist response generating means to thereby initiate the playlist generating means;

20 first communications means for establishing a playlist response send communications
link with the client device via the communications network over which the playlist response
is transmitted to the client device; and

22 second communications means for establishing a playlist request receive
communications link with the client device via the communications network,

24 wherein the information server system and the playlist server are independently
controlled.

127. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 identifies the client device as one of a hardware client device and a software client device.

128. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 includes at least one of user demographics and user/client device behavior.

129. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein the database driver further
2 comprises:

database communications means for instantiating a database communications link
4 between the playlist analysis means and the database;

query means for executing the query, which includes at least one SQL statement; and

6 retrieving means for retrieving database outputs responsive to the query and providing
the database output to the playlist analysis means.

130. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein:

2 the selected information comprises client information identifying current playlists
controlling presentation of respective groups of the selected ads by the client device; and

4 the playlist response includes a new playlist generated by the playlist server based on
the current playlists.

131. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein:

2 the selected information comprises client information; and

4 the playlist response includes a new playlist generated by the playlist server based at
least partially on the client information contained in the playlist request.

132. The playlist server as recited in Claim 131, wherein the client information
2 includes information indicative of usage history of the client device.

133. The playlist server as recited in Claim 131, wherein the client information
2 includes a user data field identifying the respective software operating on the client device.

134. The playlist server as recited in Claim 133, wherein the user data field further
2 includes information identifying an operating system of the client device on which the
software is running.

135. The playlist server as recited in Claim 131, wherein:

2 the client information includes a user data field; and
the playlist response is generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the
4 client information contained in the playlist request.

136. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 includes usage data relating to the amount of time the user has used the client device over a
prescribed time interval.

137. The playlist server as recited in Claim 136, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the usage data.

138. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 includes a display time remaining data field that specifies the total amount of display time
required for the stored ads that remain to be presented by the client device.

139. The playlist server as recited in Claim 138, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the display time remaining data
field.

140. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein the playlist request includes
2 a display time used recently data field that specifies the total amount of times that ads were
presented by the client device during a prescribed time interval.

141. The playlist server as recited in Claim 140, wherein the prescribed time interval
2 comprises the present day.

142. The playlist server as recited in Claim 140, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the display time used recently data
field.

143. The playlist server as recited in Claim 142, wherein the prescribed time interval
2 comprises the present day.

144. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 further includes client device display screen data that specifies dimensions of a display screen
associated with the client device.

145. The playlist server as recited in Claim 144, wherein the dimensions include the
2 height, width, and depth of the display screen, in pixels.

146. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 includes a distributor ID identifying the distributor of the client device.

147. The playlist server as recited in Claim 146, wherein the distributor ID is used in
2 selecting at least one characteristic of the ads presented by the client device.

148. The playlist server as recited in Claim 146, wherein the playlist response
2 includes a new playlist identifying ads which are presentable only by the client device having
the respective distributor ID.

149. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 includes a list of the ad identifiers corresponding to ads that have been presented by the client
device during a prescribed recent time interval.

150. The playlist server as recited in Claim 149, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server based at least partially on the advertisements that have been
displayed in a prescribed recent time interval identified in the playlist request.

151. The playlist server as recited in Claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 includes at least two of:

a first user data field identifying a current playlist;

- 4 a second user data field identifying user demographic data;
a third user data field identifying user/client device behavior data;
6 a fourth user data field identifying usage history of the client device;
a fifth user data field identifying the respective software operating on the client
8 device;
a sixth user data field identifying the respective operating system of the client device;
10 a seventh user data field identifying the amount of time the user has used client device
over a prescribed time interval;
12 an eighth user data field identifying the total amount of display time required for the
stored ads that remain to be presented by the client device;
14 a ninth user data field identifying the total amount of times that ads were presented by
the client device during the prescribed time interval;
16 a tenth user data field identifying the dimensions of a display screen associated with
the client device; and
18 a list of the ad identifiers corresponding to advertisements that have been displayed in
the prescribed most recent time interval.

152. The playlist server as recited in Claim 151, wherein the playlist server responds
2 to the playlist request by either by transmitting to the client device an indication that the
current playlist is valid and does not need to be updated, or by transmitting to the client device
4 the playlist response including a new playlist.

153. The playlist server as recited in Claim 151, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server responsive to field data included in at least two of the first
through tenth user data fields.

154. The playlist server as recited in Claim 151, wherein the playlist response is
2 generated by the playlist server responsive to one of the first through tenth user data fields and
the list of the ad identifies included in the selected information.

155. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein the playlist response
2 comprises a new playlist identifying an ad type for one of the respective ads.

156. The playlist server as recited in claim 155, wherein the ad type corresponds to a
2 postage stamp ad.

157. The playlist server as recited in claim 155, wherein the ad type corresponds to a
2 toolbar ad.

158. The playlist server as recited in claim 155, wherein the ad type corresponds to a
2 placard ad.

159. The playlist server as recited in claim 155, wherein the ad type indicates the
2 timing employed by the client device in presenting the respective one of the ads.

160. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein the selected information
2 identifies a distributor of the client device.

161. The playlist server as recited in claim 160, wherein:

2 the client device comprises a software client device;

the distributor provides the respective software for instantiating the software client
4 device; and

the playlist response is generated by the playlist server based on the identity of the
6 distributor.

162. The playlist server as recited in claim 160, wherein:

2 the client device comprises a hardware client device;

the distributor provides the hardware client device to the user;

4 the playlist response is generated by the playlist server based on the identity of the
distributor.

163. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein the playlist request comprises
2 an extensible markup language (XML) playlist request.

164. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein the playlist request parsing
2 means employs a document type definition (DTD).

165. The playlist server as recited in claim 164, wherein a respective DTD
2 corresponding to one of a plurality of client device types is stored by the playlist server.

166. The playlist server as recited in claim 164, wherein the DTD is embedded in the
2 playlist request.

167. The playlist server as recited in claim 166, wherein the DTD is specific to one of
2 a plurality of client device types.

168. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein:

2 the playlist request comprises an extensible markup language (XML) playlist request;

the playlist request includes a document type definition (DTD) tag identifying a DTD
4 associated with the XML playlist request;
the playlist server stores a respective DTD corresponding to the DTD tag; and
6 the playlist request parsing means employs the DTD corresponding to the DTD tag.

169. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein the playlist analysis means
2 receives the output of the database driver and constructs the playlist response.

170. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the client device employs a plurality of current playlists; and
4 one of the current playlists is replaced by the new playlist when the client device
receives the new playlist.

171. The playlist server as recited in claim 170, wherein the playlist response includes
2 an instruction directing the client device to replace one of the current playlists with the new
playlist.

172. The playlist server as recited in claim 126, wherein:
2 the playlist response generated by the playlist server comprises a new playlist;
the client device employs a plurality of current playlists; and
4 at least one of the selected ads is deleted from the current playlists when the client
device receives the new playlist.

173. The playlist server as recited in claim 172, wherein the playlist response includes
2 an instruction directing the client device to delete the at least one of the selected ads from the
current playlists.

174. The playlist server as recited in claim 172, wherein the new playlist becomes one
2 of the current playlists when the playlist response is received by the client device.